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SCIENCE AND POLITICS

At the St. Louis meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the council passed the following resolution:

That sectional officers avoid placing on their programs papers relating to acute political questions on which public opinion is divided.

I know nothing of the circumstances leading to this resolution. If papers offered to the sections were inspired by partisan politics rather than by science, they would deserve condemnation and exclusion. But the resolution does not refer to such papers; it implies that scientific men should not discuss matters relating to acute political questions on which public opinion is divided. To one who believes that in the present chaos of conflicting opinions and purposes the finger of science should point the way to safety, this seems almost incredibly stupid. I am of course aware that a scientific man who tries to throw the light of truth on the field of political discussion is not unlikely to be abused for his pains. He may find honest people doubting his integrity or his intelligence. He himself is only too well aware of his liability to error. But in the face of all this, he must and should persevere, knowing well that his feet are set upon the path of progress.

T. D. A. COCKERELL

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO,
January 14, 1920

QUOTATIONS

THE DUES OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
AND THE SALARIES OF SCIENTIFIC MEN

THE revised constitution of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, as presented at the Baltimore meeting, was adopted at St. Louis with only one substantial change—an increase of the annual dues to five dollars. This change had been recommended, after careful consideration, by the committee on policy and the council and was adopted by unanimous vote at the opening general session of the association. The increase in the dues only meets the general situation. All the expenses of the association have increased in some such proportion, except the salaries of

the officers, and it would be unfair to them and a bad example to other institutions, to retain nominal salaries paid in depreciated dollars. This has been done in the case of teachers in many institutions of learning and for scientific men in the service of the government, while commensurate with the increased cost of living have been the increases in wages for many of the working classes, and of the earnings of most professional and business men.

Institutions of learning and the scientific bureaus of the government have suffered alarming losses from their staffs. At the present time many men of science are hesitating between loyalty to their institutions and research work, on the one hand, and duty to their families and the attraction of new opportunities, on the other. In one government bureau three men are now holding open offers of twenty to thirty thousand dollars a year to see whether the Congress will increase their salaries to six or eight thousand.

If men are driven away from positions where they are using their ability and their training for the general good, and if those who remain are compelled to use time that should be devoted to research or teaching to earning money from outside sources, the future of science and with it the welfare of the nation will be jeopardized. A generation might pass before there would be recovery from the resulting demoralization. It would be indeed humiliating to conquer Germany in war and then permit it to surpass us in the arts of peace.

It is certainly unfortunate that the American Association should be compelled to increase its dues, as measured in dollars, at a time when all costs are advancing to such an extent that those living on fixed salaries find it extremely difficult to make both ends meet. It would, however, be a still more serious misfortune to permit the work of the association and its publications to be crippled. These are important factors in the advancement of science and in impressing on the general public the place of science in modern civilization and the need of maintaining research work for the national welfare.

The meetings of the association and the